Dear Educators,

It is with great pride that we present this Teacher Guide for our new exhibit, *Black Founders: The Forten Family of Philadelphia*. Since we opened our doors on April 19, 2017, we've come to know thousands of educators who face the same challenge: how to help young people make the leap from our world today to a time long ago, and come back with valuable lessons about how we as a nation came to be and why that matters today.

Our educational materials help teachers use our Museum's resources to bring the past to life through powerful stories, objects and other primary source materials. Using these methods, connection is made through the drama of human experience. Importantly, the world that is revealed is one that is diverse, dynamic, and interconnected by the exchange of goods, money and ideas, much like our world is today. In our Museum's telling, the American Revolution is a sweeping transformation that captured the imaginations and impacted the lives of men, women and children from all walks of life.

The materials presented here explore James Forten's role in the American Revolution and how he and his family navigated cross-racial relationships in Philadelphia to become leaders in the abolitionist movement in the lead-up to the Civil War. The resources were created for use by both educators and students, as part of pre or post-visit activities in the classroom or independent of a visit to the Museum, and can be modified for different age and ability levels. The pack contains primary source materials, historical content and suggested activities designed to explore challenges and opportunities faced by James Forten during the Revolutionary War and then as a business leader and advocate of the abolitionist movement. It also reveals the rich cast of characters that populated the stage of Forten's dramatic life as it unfolded in Philadelphia, the new nation's capital and one of its largest and most culturally diverse cities. The resources also explore the contributions of his family to important causes of the time and why their story matters to us today.

The Museum is committed to producing well-researched, high-quality programs and learning resources that draw on the Museum's collections and exhibits to present multiple historical perspectives through the eyes of real people who lived through the Revolution, like James Forten. In doing so, we empower learners to think critically, understand and respect the views of others, and make positive changes in their communities and beyond.

To learn more about educational opportunities at the Museum, please visit our website, where you can sign up for our educator e-newsletter, or contact us at education@amrevmuseum.org. We hope your students enjoy these materials and that they help you to bring the stories of James Forten and the ongoing American Revolution to life!

Sincerely,

Education Team

John M. Templeton, Jr. Education Center
How to Use this Resource

This Black Founders: The Forten Family of Philadelphia Teacher Resource Guide supports educators in helping their students to prepare for or reflect upon our special exhibit and the story of James Forten and his family, whether they visit the Museum in person, explore the exhibit online, or use the resources independently. Through seven thematic units, this guide presents suggested activities as well as supplemental resources — including thematic big idea overviews (background information), primary sources and high-quality images, and a glossary — to assist you in carrying out your lessons. The suggested activities in these units are modular, designed to allow you to mix and match or pick and choose which activities will fit best in your classroom based on your needs and time. Each unit includes activities suggested for student engagement, idea development, and culmination. Content is targeted at the middle school level, with suggestions and/or extensions to make many activities suitable for upper elementary and high school classes. All units are aligned to history standards from the National Center for History in the Schools at the University of California, Los Angeles, which were developed under the guidance of the National Council for History Standards. These include Historical Thinking Standards and United States History Content Standards (Grades 5-12).

Please be aware of the environment you and your students create when discussing the experiences of people of African descent, particularly enslaved people. This can be an emotional topic with the power to create lasting memories for students of all backgrounds, particularly those who continue to experience racism in the present.

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TELL US!

How did you use the activities and resources in this guide?

Send us an e-mail at education@amrevmuseum.org or connect with us on social media (@amrevmuseum) to share activities in action, or examples of student work!
This unit explores the early life of James Forten by describing what life was like in Philadelphia during the years leading up to the Revolutionary War. Through understanding the role of Philadelphia during Forten’s youth, students can consider how one’s early experiences can shape their future. This unit also explores the issue of slavery in relation to the preamble of the Declaration of Independence’s promise that “all men are created equal.”

AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

The modular activities and extensions in this unit provide opportunities for students to:

- Explore what life was like in Philadelphia before the Revolutionary War.
- Consider how slavery impacted various communities in Philadelphia before the Revolutionary War and how slavery stood in contrast with the promises of the Declaration of Independence.
- Practice historical empathy and critical thinking by relating to the experiences of young James Forten.

MATERIALS

Big Idea 1: Young James Forten’s World: Life in Revolutionary Philadelphia

Map: A plan of the city of Philadelphia, the capital of Pennsylvania, from an actual survey, Library of Congress, Geography and Map Division
https://www.loc.gov/resource/g3824p.pr131200/?r=-0.343,-0.016,1.682,0.827,0

Worksheet: The Meaning of Slavery

PROCEDURES

Engagement, Option 1 (5-10 minutes)

MY HOMETOWN

Teacher preparation: Bring a pack of Post-it notes to class.

Have students place their Post-it note in the front of the classroom. Read the Post-it notes out loud. Then ask students:
- How do these places contribute to the community?
- Is your community special or unique in any way?

Engagement, Option 2 (15-20 minutes)

THE DECLARATION OF INDEPENDENCE AND JAMES FORTEN


Have students read Big Idea 1 either in class or as a homework assignment. Afterwards, read the preamble of the Declaration of Independence out loud to the class.

Engage students in conversation around the following questions:
- How might James Forten have felt about the preamble as a 9 year-old free person of African descent?
- What concerns might he have had about the document?
- What opportunities might he have considered?
- Why do you think James Forten remembered this moment years later in his life?

EXTEND: Have students create a 1-2 page diary entry as if they were James Forten describing this event and his reactions to it.
Development, Option 1 (35-40 minutes)

JAMES FORTEN’S PHILADELPHIA

Teacher Preparation: Ensure students have access to computers, tablets, or other devices with working internet connections to read Big Idea 1: Young James Forten’s World: Life in Revolutionary Philadelphia or print out enough copies for each student. Prepare to display the map: A plan of the city of Philadelphia, the capital of Pennsylvania, from an actual survey.

After students have read Big Idea 1, display the map. Engage students in a conversation around the following questions:

• What places in Philadelphia were important to the early life of James Forten?
• How was James Forten affected by living in Philadelphia?
• How would his young life have been different if he lived in another place?
• How is Philadelphia a character in the early life of James Forten? In other words, how did the city play a role in his daily life?

Have students consider how their lives differ from each other based on where they live and create an essay, tri-fold poster, or theatrical performance addressing all or one of the following questions:

• To what extent has my life been affected by where I live?
• How might where I live today affect my future?
• How is my town a part of my life?
• How would my town be different if I was born elsewhere?

Development, Option 2 (35-45 minutes)

THE MEANING OF SLAVERY

Teacher preparation: Prepare copies of The Meaning of Slavery worksheet. Ensure students have access to computers, tablets, or other devices with working internet connections to read Big Idea 1: Young James Forten’s World: Life in Revolutionary Philadelphia or print out enough copies for each student.

Distribute the worksheet: The Meaning of Slavery. After students have had time to complete the worksheet, engage them in conversation around the following questions:

How might different people living in Philadelphia at the time have viewed slavery? What do you think they thought the word meant?

Break students into 4 groups assigning them one of the following people or groups. Ask students to consider how the following individuals might have viewed each of these quotes? Give them time to reread the quotes based on their individual.

• James Forten (a free young boy of African descent)
• A slave owner
• A person who is opposed to British policies (someone who strongly wanted their rights as British subjects).
• A Quaker who is against slavery (Quakers at the time were beginning to question the morality of slavery).

Have the students present their findings to the rest of the class. Conclude by asking how the word slave had different meanings to groups of people. Does the word have different meanings today?

Culmination - Timeline Project

JAMES FORTEN AND YOU TIMELINE

Teacher preparation: Review Big Idea 1: Young James Forten’s World: Life in Revolutionary Philadelphia. Ensure students have access to computers, tablets, or other devices with working internet connections to read Big Idea 1 or print out enough copies for each student.

Have students create a timeline of important events leading up to the Revolutionary War from 1765 to 1775 and identify how old James Forten was at each event. Then underneath the event, write how these events might have affected him.

Then, have students create a timeline of the important events that happened during their life. Again, underneath the events, have the students write how the events affected them. Have students present their timeline to the class or display them in your classroom.
EXTENSIONS/ ADAPTATIONS

HOMETOWN DIVERSITY – Research Project
Instruct students to read Big Idea 1: Young James Forten’s World: Life in Revolutionary Philadelphia to better understand the diversity of the city James Forten knew as a child.

Next, ask students to research recent census data or other records to learn about their city’s diversity today. Then, discuss what having a diverse populace means for a city (e.g., languages spoken and heard, foods eaten, religions practiced, skills brought and shared). What are the opportunities and challenges for a diverse city today?

MY NEIGHBORHOOD – Creative Map Project
Optional teacher preparation: Gather examples of old, new, and/or conceptual artistic maps.

Ask students to draw (or assemble from photographs or found images) a “map” of their neighborhood, city, or route to school, marking locations that are important to them. This could be a straightforward map or more abstract visual representation. Then, ask them to reflect on the following questions: How have these places and the people in or near them influenced you? How have you affected these places and people? Is there a specific place that you like to gather with friends or family? (Additional Option: Students’ maps could be combined as a class to create a large collective map display.)

MY COMMUNITY – Art/Media Project
Ask students to use any medium that interests or inspires them (drawing/painting, photography, collage/mixed media, digital media, creative writing, or a combination) to design and produce a creative product that responds to the questions:

• How is your community important to you?
• If you could change something in your community, what would it be and why?

PHILADELPHIA: THEN & NOW – Research Project
Ask students to use Google Maps or other tools to research one or more modern landscapes of spaces that were significant to James Forten’s early life in Philadelphia. Ask them to answer in some form: How are these spaces today different from or similar to the city James Forten knew? How and why have they changed?

PHILADELPHIA QUAKERS AND EARLY ABOLITIONISTS
Have students research the role of Philadelphia Quakers in regard to the abolition of slavery in the years leading up to the Revolutionary War. Assign students to write a newspaper article as if they were living in 1775, about the meeting of the first antislavery society in America (the Society for the Relief of Free Negroes Unlawfully Held in Bondage) at the Rising Sun Tavern in Philadelphia.

SLAVERY IN THE NORTH
Ask students why they think most history books have associated the institution of slavery primarily with the plantation economy of the southern colonies. Then have students research how slavery was similar and different in the Northern colonies.

EDUCATION
Have students research how various groups of people were educated in Philadelphia before the Revolutionary War. How were schools and education different from schools today? Have students create a Venn Diagram comparing and contrasting the similarities and differences between education today and before the Revolutionary War.

YOUR HOME
Have students research what was happening in their city/town in the years leading up to the Revolutionary War. Assign them to create a newspaper account commemorating the role of their community.
Black Soldiers and Sailors in the Revolutionary War

The purpose of this unit is to help students learn more about the role of people of African descent during the Revolutionary War. Students will consider how the war created both challenges and opportunities for soldiers, privateers, and enslaved people. By focusing on the story of James Forten, students will consider how the Revolutionary War offered Forten a chance to experience equality, adventure, and opportunities while shaping his future.

AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

The modular activities and extensions in this unit provide opportunities for students to:

- Explore the various roles that soldiers and sailors of African descent played in the Revolutionary War.
- Practice historical empathy and critical thinking by evaluating the risks and rewards that accompanied deciding with whom to side during the Revolutionary War.
- Discover the story of James Forten and how the Revolutionary War presented him with opportunities to experience equality.
- Consider the impact of the Revolutionary War on the lives and opportunities of people of African descent.

PROCEDURES

Engagement, Option 1 (10-15 minutes)

A SOLDIER’S REWARD

Teacher preparation: Prepare to display or project the document Bristol Caesar Pay Voucher.

Engage students in conversation around the following questions:

- What reward(s) do you think was appropriate for soldiers who fought in the Revolutionary War?

Then display or project the document Bristol Caesar Pay Voucher

- What is the document?
- Why do you think this document was important for the person who owned it?

Then explain to students that this was a pay voucher issued to a soldier of African descent.

Why might this document be important in telling the story of the American Revolution?

Engagement, Option 2 (15-20 minutes)

THE PRISONER LIST

Teacher preparation: Prepare to display or project the document Muster Book from the Jersey Prison Ship.

Engage students in conversation around the following question:

- What are some reasons people create lists of names?

Then, project or display the document Muster Book from the Jersey Prison Ship.

- What do you think this list was used for?

Then explain to students that this is a list of prisoners on a ship.

- Why would names be listed on this document?
- What can this list tell historians?
- What would you expect conditions to be like on this ship?
- How might relationships with fellow prisoners develop on a prison ship?
Development, Option 1 (35-40 minutes)

RISKS AND REWARDS

Teacher Preparation: Review Big Idea 2: Black Soldiers and Sailors in the Revolutionary War. Ensure students have access to computers, tablets, or other devices with working internet connections to read Big Idea 2 or print out enough copies for each student.

Ask students if they have ever had to make an important decision. Did they consider the risks before making the decision? The possible rewards? Have students read Big Idea 2: Black Soliders and Sailors in the Revolutionary War.

Divide students into three groups as follows and explain to students that they are going to consider the decisions made by enslaved people during the Revolutionary War.

- Remain in place and see what happens at the end of the war
- Fight for the Continental Army, hoping the new nation will include them in the ideal that “all men are created equal”
- Fight for the British, hoping they will honor their promise of freedom to those that joined them

In their groups, ask students to make a list of the risks and rewards that might be involved for an enslaved person given their assigned decision during the Revolutionary War. Then have students present their list to the class. (Their lists might be easiest to frame as “If…, then…” statements.)

After students have presented their risks and rewards, engage them in a conversation around the following questions:

- What risks were similar between all three groups?
- What rewards other than freedom did you consider? Was freedom the only reward?
- How did the potential rewards affect the risks that people of African descent were willing to take?

EXTEND: Have students think about a risk they have taken and how the potential rewards affected their decision.

Development, Option 2 (35-40 minutes)

WHAT WOULD YOU DO/ DEBATE

Teacher preparation: Review Big Idea 2: Black Soldiers and Sailors in the Revolutionary War. Ensure students have access to computers, tablets, or other devices with working internet connections to read Big Idea 2 or print out enough copies for each student.

Tell students they are going to consider the decision James Forten made to stay on the prison ship and not take Captain Bazely’s offer. Break students into 2 groups: 1) Take the Offer and 2) Reject Offer. In their groups, instruct students to come up with a pro/con list. Then, have them consider reasons why their option is the best one for James Forten at the time it was presented to him.

After students have had time to come up with their arguments in their groups, have them debate which is the better offer. After the debate, have the class vote on what they would have done in James Forten’s place. How did hearing both sides of the argument influence your decision?

EXTEND: Have students consider what might have happened to James Forten if he decided to accept Captain Bazely’s offer to go to England.

Development, Option 3 (40-45 minutes)

BRAVE MEN AS EVER FOUGHT

Teacher preparation: Review Big Idea 2: Black Soldiers and Sailors in the Revolutionary War, specifically the section on the Integrated and Segregated Soldiers. Print out enough copies of the section for the students or make sure they will have internet access to read it online. Prepare to display or project the painting Brave Men as Ever Fought by Don Troiani.

Display or project Brave Men as Ever Fought by Don Troiani. Give students time to examine the painting. Lead them in a close-looking activity with the following questions:

- What is going on in the scene?
- What might the soldiers be feeling? What about the people in the street? What do you see in the painting that makes you say that? What other information is shaping your ideas?
- Describe the young boy of African descent holding his hat. Why do you think Don Troiani put him in the middle of the painting?

Then have students read the Big Idea section Integrated and Segregated Soldiers. After they have finished reading, engage students in a conversation around the following questions:

- How close were their observations of the painting to the real story? (found in the Big Idea essay section James Forten and the Revolutionary War)
- What do you think James Forten was feeling when he witnessed this scene?
- What did Forten mean by saying the soldiers were “as brave Men as ever fought”?
- Why do you think Forten remembered this event 50 years later?
- Have you experienced anything in your life that you feel you might remember 50 years from now? Why?

EXTEND: Have students research the battles in which the Rhode Island Regiment fought and then create a report in the style of their choosing — film, paper, song, etc. — on their contributions to the Continental Army.
EXTENSIONS/ ADAPTATIONS

AN OCCUPIED TEENAGER
Sally Wister, a 15 year old girl living in Philadelphia also witnessed the occupation of the city. Have students research her story to create a Venn diagram of the two teenagers’ experiences.

• How might they have felt differently about the British occupying their city.
• What challenges and opportunities might they have faced as a young person experiencing this event?
• How do you think the experience of living in an occupied city affected them?

ACTS OF KINDNESS
James Forten gave up his chance to escape in a sea-chest for another young privateer from Philadelphia who was very sick, named Daniel Brewton. Brewton made it home to Philadelphia and never forgot this act of kindness and he and Forten became friends for life. Ask students to consider doing an act of kindness and discuss how their action might positively impact someone else in a lasting way.

NEW YORK CITY TO PHILADELPHIA
Ask students how long they think the distance is between New York City and Philadelphia (about 100 miles). Ask them to brainstorm ways that you can get from New York City to Philadelphia today. How long would it take to walk? (Approximately 27 hours). Engage students in conversation around the following questions:
• What do you think James Forten experienced during this long walk?
• How might he have found food and water?
• Where do you think he slept?
• What thoughts might have been going through his mind?

PRIVATEERS NEEDED!
Have students research privateers during the Revolutionary War to create an advertisement recruiting for privateers in Philadelphia in 1781, the year of James Forten’s voyages aboard the Royal Louis. Advertisements can be in the form of broadsides, video commercials or performances. Instruct students to include the risks and rewards to being a privateer.

WHY THE REVOLUTION?
We don’t exactly know why James Forten fought on the side of the Revolutionaries. After students have read Big Idea 2: Black Soldiers and Sailors in the Revolutionary War, have them individually or in groups consider the following possible reasons why James Forten may have fought for the Revolutionaries as a privateer and rank them in order of importance. Students will then justify their rankings to the class.
• Hearing the Declaration of Independence being read in Philadelphia
• Living in Occupied Philadelphia and experiencing the British control the city
• Desire to make money to help his family
• Gradual Abolition Law of 1780 and the promises in the Declaration of Independence
• Knowing that other people of African descent served the Revolutionary cause
• Knowing he would have a good chance to be accepted on a privateering ship because of his knowledge of sail making

OPPORTUNITIES IN OCCUPIED PHILADELPHIA
Have students research what the British occupation of Philadelphia was like for the following groups. What opportunities and challenges did they face?
• Enslaved people
• Merchants
• Loyalists
• Revolutionaries who stayed in the city
• Those attempting to remain neutral

PRIVATEERING ETHICAL?
Ask students what the word ethical means? Discuss with students if they think using privateer ships is an ethical war tactic. Why or why not?
This unit explores the various ways that people of African descent pushed to end slavery and demand equal rights in the years following the Revolutionary War. Focusing on the story of James Forten in Philadelphia, students will be able to understand the challenges facing people of African descent and their efforts to enact change.

**AIMS AND OBJECTIVES**

The modular activities and extensions in this unit provide opportunities for students to:

- Explore the various ways that people of African descent challenged the promises of the Declaration of Independence that "all men are created equal."
- Consider the impact of the Revolutionary War on the lives and opportunities of people of African descent.
- Discover how James Forten confronted the inequalities faced by people of African descent.
- Consider how they can enact changes within their own communities today.

**MATERIALS**

**Big Idea 3: African American Freedom and Community, 1780-1813**

**Object:** Shackles, Museum of the American Revolution (Navigate to the section Becoming Revolutionaries and then the Declaration of Independence. The shackles can be found in the section The Promise of Equality: African Americans) [https://museumvirtualtour.org/]

**Worksheet:** In the Words of Forten

**Worksheet:** Interview Elizabeth Freeman

**Worksheet:** Take Action!

**Primary Source:** An Act for the Gradual Abolition of Slavery, 1780 [https://avalon.law.yale.edu/18th_century/pennst01.asp]

**Primary Source:** George Washington to Tobias Lear, 1791 [https://founders.archives.gov/documents/Washington/05-08-02-0062]

**PROCEDURES**

**Engagement, Option 1 (5-10 minutes)**

**PETITION**

Ask students what it means to petition. Why would anyone want to petition someone or something? Discuss with students if there is anything in their school rules that they would petition?

**EXTEND:** Pick 4 issues that students came up with and assign a corner of the room for each issue. Have students move to the corner of the room based on which issue they would consider petitioning. In their corners, have students justify their choice and explain their position, presenting their argument to the class afterward.

**Engagement, Option 2 (10-15 minutes)**

**OBJECT OBSERVATION: SHACKLES**

**NOTE:** Please be aware of the environment you and your students create when discussing the experiences of people of African descent, particularly enslaved people. This can be an emotional topic with the power to create lasting memories for students of all backgrounds, particularly those who continue to experience racism in the present.

**Teacher preparation:** Prepare to project or display the object Shackles.

Ask students to describe the object (shape, size, color) and then guess what the object is (many students might think the object is a pair of glasses).

Engage students in a conversation around the following questions:

- What might this object have meant to those opposing slavery after the Revolutionary War?
- How can we use objects, like this one, to better understand history?

**Development, Option 1 (30-40 minutes)**

**IN THE WORDS OF FORTEN**

**Teacher Preparation:** Review Big Idea 3: African American Freedom
and Community, 1780-1813 and print enough copies for students or ensure they have working internet access and devices to read Big Idea 3. Prepare copies of the In the Words of Forten worksheet.

Start by engaging students in a conversation around the following questions:

• Why was it easier for James Forten to make his voice heard than it was for many other Black Philadelphians?
• Is this true of business leaders today?

Then, give students time to complete the worksheet In the Words of Forten, individually or in small groups. Afterwards, have students reflect on what issues were most important to James Forten. Have students use the excerpts to justify their answers.

EXTEND: Have students create a word cloud on the actual words of James Forten using the quotes provided.

Development, Option 2 (35-40 minutes)

INTERVIEW ELIZABETH FREEMAN

Teacher preparation: Review Big Idea 3: African American Freedom and Community, 1780-1813 and print enough copies for each student or ensure that they have internet access and devices to read Big Idea 3. Prepare copies of the Interview Elizabeth Freeman worksheet.

Engage students in a conversation around the following question:

• How do you think hearing the words in the Massachusetts State Constitution impacted Elizabeth Freeman’s desire to take charge of her life?

Then, individually or in groups, allow students to complete the worksheet. Have them present their observations to the class.


Culmination

TAKE ACTION!

Teacher preparation: Prepare copies of the Take Action worksheet. Have students pick or assign them one of the following people to research. Have students focus on the actions their person took to solve the issues or challenges they were up against. After they have completed the worksheet, have them present their findings to the class. Hang up the Take Action worksheet around the room or have students create illustrated posters for this purpose using the information from the worksheet.

• Prince Hall
• James Armistead Lafayette
• Belinda
• Elizabeth Freeman
• Brom
• Benjamin Banneker
• Prince Whipple
• Quock Walker
• Reverend Peter Williams
• Henry Highland Garnet
• Paul Cuffe
• John Brown Russwurm
• Anthony Benezet
• Richard Allen

EXTENSIONS/ADAPTATIONS

ANONYMOUSLY

Ask students why they believe that James Forten wrote as “A Man of Colour” rather than James Forten? How would being a successful businessman have influenced his decision? What are some reasons you might consider writing something anonymously?

BEING FREE IN 1790

What did being a free person of African descent mean in each of the original 13 states in the year 1790? Have students pick one state (or have them pair up with another student). Have students research what it meant to be a free person of African descent in their specific state. What rights did they have? Were they able to vote? Have students present their findings to the class.

GRADUAL ABOLITION LAWS

Ask students why they think states chose to gradually eliminate slavery rather than immediately eliminate it. Then assign students one of the original 13 states to research how these laws differed in each state. In addition, have students consider how free and enslaved people of African descent might have viewed these laws.

GRADUAL ABOLITION IN PENNSYLVANIA

After reading Big Idea 3: African American Freedom and Community, 1780-1813 assign students to research how the “Act for the Gradual Abolition of Slavery” was received in Pennsylvania and the new nation. How did enslavers, even George Washington, get around the law using the text from section 10 of the document? What did the letter from George Washington to his Executive Secretary Tobias Lear reveal about Washington’s intentions? https://founders.archives.gov/documents/Washington/05-08-02-0062 https://avalon.law.yale.edu/18th_century/pennst01.asp
James Forten and Entrepreneurs of African Descent

The purpose of this unit is to have students consider the importance of businessmen and women of African descent during the decades after the Revolutionary War. Using the story of James Forten, students can consider the challenges and opportunities of becoming an entrepreneur as a person of African descent during the first half of the 1800s. Students will explore how James Forten made his wealth in a sailmaking business and the stories of others of African descent in Philadelphia and around the country who became entrepreneurs in a wide range of industries.

AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

The modular activities and extensions in this unit provide opportunities for students to:

• Discover how James Forten became the leading entrepreneur of African descent in Philadelphia during the first half of the 1800s.

• Consider the important contributions of other business leaders of African descent in the decades following the Revolutionary War both in Philadelphia and around the nation.

• Evaluate the challenges and opportunities of becoming an entrepreneur today.

MATERIALS

Big Idea 4: James Forten and Entrepreneurs of African Descent

Object Card: Tools of the Trade

Advertisement: Joseph Cassey advertisement in United States directory for the use of travellers and merchants: giving an account of the principal establishments, of business and pleasure, throughout the Union / by Joshua Shaw
(The Library Company of Philadelphia)

https://www.dropbox.com/s/wxh4g3kz2cx69wm/101_Joseph%20Cassey%20Advert.tif?dl=0

Worksheet: What We Know

Handout: Business Leaders of African Descent in the Early 19th Century

Recording: The Grave of the Slave, lyrics by Sarah L. Forten and music by Francis Johnson. Sung by Candace Nicole Potts of the Jeremy Winston Chorale, accompanied by Jeremy Winston on piano, 2021


PROCEDURES

Engagement, Option 1 (10-15 minutes)

WOULD YOU BE AN ENTREPRENEUR?

Teacher preparation: Prepare to display or project the advertisement for Joseph Cassey.

Project or display the advertisement. Engage students in a conservation around the following questions:

• What is this document? What do you see that makes you think this?
• What is being advertised?
• Why are the names William Davenport and Joseph Cassey displayed so boldly?

Then, engage students in conversation around the following questions:

• Do you know what an entrepreneur does?
• Would you rather work for an established company/organization or become an entrepreneur?
• What responsibilities do entrepreneurs have to give back to their community?
• If you had a lot of money to give back to the community, which organizations would you choose and why?

EXTEND: Discuss with students what would be the pros and cons of becoming an entrepreneur or working for an established company.
Engagement, Option 2 (10-15 minutes)

OBJECT INVESTIGATION: TOOLS OF THE TRADE

Teacher preparation: Review Big Idea 4: James Forten and Entrepreneurs of African Descent. Prepare to project or display the Object Card Tools of the Trade.

Ask students to describe each object (color, shape, size, what they are made of). Then, ask them to consider what the tools were used for and attempt to justify their responses. After they have had time to think about the objects and guess what they might have been used for, reveal the purpose of the tools. Explain that young James Forten used similar tools alongside his father, Thomas, who was a sailmaker. Conclude by asking students if they could learn a trade or craft, what would it be and why?

EXTEND: Have students research what other trades existed in the 18th century and how a master and apprentice relationship worked in these trades.

Development, Option 1

(35-45 minutes and research time)

BUSINESS CHALLENGES

Teacher preparation: Review Big Idea 4: James Forten and Entrepreneurs of African Descent. Ensure students have access to computers, tablets, or other devices with working internet connections to read Big Idea 4 or print out enough copies for each student.

Break the students into small groups (or pairs). After they are in their groups, assign each group one of the following challenges for James Forten's business.

- Many people did not consider Forten to be a citizen and had prejudices about his ability to run a business as a person of African descent
- James Forten was not able to vote
- A President Thomas Jefferson's trade embargo in 1807
- The War of 1812
- The city of Philadelphia was no longer the capital of Pennsylvania and the country
- New York City surpassed Philadelphia as the nation's largest city and economic center

In their groups or pairs, have students consider:

- How might James Forten's business been affected by your assigned challenge?
- Did the challenge exist for business leaders after James Forten? Does it still exist today?

Have students present their findings to the class. Conclude by having a class discussion on ways to address these types of challenges today.

Development, Option 2 (40-45 minutes)

WHAT WE KNOW

Teacher preparation: Review Big Idea 4: James Forten and Entrepreneurs of African Descent. Ensure students have access to computers, tablets, or other devices with working internet connections to read Big Idea 4 or print out enough copies for each student. Prepare copies of the What We Know handout.

Explain to students that unfortunately, most of James Forten's business papers are missing. They were either burned, thrown away, or lost. However, we can gather information about his business from the few primary sources that have been found. Assign students in groups or individually to complete the worksheet: What We Know.

Afterwards, engage students in conversation around the following questions:

- How did the primary sources help uncover information about James Forten's business?
- What did they reveal about the business?
- How can documents help historians uncover information about the past?

EXTEND: Have students create a list of sources they would need to create a better picture of James Forten's business.

Culmination

(2 class periods: one class for research, one for the fair)

BUSINESS FAIR/GROUP ACTIVITY


Have students individually, in pairs or in small groups choose an entrepreneur of African descent from the handout. Assign students to create a commercial, tri-fold, or poster board that will feature the business of the person. Encourage students to be creative and think about how they could sell their product to customers in the time period (middle of the 1800s) and how their company plans to give back to the community. In addition, as part of the activity, have them create a visual example of the business (food, music, product, demonstration).

Dedicate a day in class as the business fair, when students can present or display their business and products.

Optional: Give each student $100 fake money to use at the business fair to buy their classmates' products or vote on which business they would most like to do business with.
EXTENSIONS/ADAPTATIONS

CREATE YOUR OWN BUSINESS
In small groups or individually, assign students to create their own businesses. Have the students present their businesses and a list of obstacles they may face. After the presentation, ask the remaining students if they would consider buying the product. Why or why not? Have a Business Fair to allow students the opportunity to table their businesses.

INTERVIEW AN ENTREPRENEUR IN YOUR COMMUNITY
Have students either find an entrepreneur to interview or invite them to your class. Ask them the following questions:
- How did you get the idea to start your business?
- How many employees do you have?
- What do you look for in an employee?
- What were your biggest challenges?
- What are you hoping to do in the future?
- If you were to give advice about starting a business, what would it be?
- How do you engage with/give back to the community?

A FORTEN FAMILY BALLAD
Have students listen to the song “The Grave of the Slave,” which was written by Sarah L. Forten and set to music by Francis Johnson. Ask them if his music reminds them of any music today. What is the mood of the piece? What emotions do you think Johnson was trying to evoke for his audience with this song?

HELP WANTED
After students have read Big Idea 4: James Forten and Entrepreneurs of African Descent, assign them to create a poster (as if they were living in 1800) advertising for workers in James Forten’s sail loft. Have them consider the benefits of Forten’s interracial workplace as part of their advertisement.

REAL ESTATE INVESTMENTS
James Forten invested much of his money in real estate. If you were to buy one piece of land or a building, what would it be and why? Why do you think it may go up in value in the future?

CHARTING YOUR CAREER
Ask students to list some of the activities they do outside of school. Then ask them to consider how and why these activities might lead to a career.

MY BUSINESS RULES
James Forten enforced various rules in his sail loft. He banned alcohol and immediately let go of any worker who showed up intoxicated (drunk). He expected his workers to arrive on time and ready to work. He kept track of time with one of his most treasured possessions, his gold watch.

Ask students: What rules would you make for your employees if you owned a business? How would you ensure you remained fair to your employees and made them want to work for you while encouraging their responsibility?
The purpose of this unit is to explore the issues that James Forten and his family were passionate about and what they did to advance those causes. Students will be able to consider why the Forten family fought specifically for these causes as a free family of African descent living in Philadelphia in the 1800s. Using the Forten family as an example, students will contemplate ways they can make a difference in the world today.

**MATERIALS**

**Big Idea 5:** The Forten Family: Abolitionists and Reformers  
**Worksheet:** Revolutionary Ideals and Actions  
**Worksheet:** Colonization: Two Sides of an Argument  
**Worksheet:** ABCDs of Action  
**Object:** The Anti-Slavery Alphabet  
(Courtesy, American Antiquarian Society)  
[https://www.dropbox.com/sh/5uq5a0i2skexk8c/AAAsbKopJQ4bRno1M67Kg2lnp?dl=0](https://www.dropbox.com/sh/5uq5a0i2skexk8c/AAAsbKopJQ4bRno1M67Kg2lnp?dl=0)  
**Image:** The Liberator Volume 1, No. 1  
(Collection of the Massachusetts Historical Society)  
[https://www.dropbox.com/sh/hz0j253ze4th7ku/AAAX8USdgohVFkxLzzU1m75Ea?dl=0](https://www.dropbox.com/sh/hz0j253ze4th7ku/AAAX8USdgohVFkxLzzU1m75Ea?dl=0)  
**Image:** Colored Scholars Excluded From Schools  
(Library Company of Philadelphia)  
[https://www.dropbox.com/sh/5aza9lz92e0x77jM170_Colored%20Scholars%20Excluded.jpg?dl=0](https://www.dropbox.com/sh/5aza9lz92e0x77jM170_Colored%20Scholars%20Excluded.jpg?dl=0)

**PROCEDURES**

**Engagement, Option 1 (5-10 minutes)**

**NEWSPAPER NAMES**

*Teacher preparation:* Prepare to display the image *The Liberator*

Show students the image of *The Liberator*. Engage students in a conversation around the following questions:

- What was the goal of this newspaper called *The Liberator*?  
- Why is a name important for a newspaper?  
- If you were creating an abolitionist newspaper, what would be the name? Justify your reasoning.

**Engagement, Option 2 (10-15 minutes)**

**A PERFECT WORLD**

*Teacher preparation:* Gather packs of Post-It notes.

Hand out two or three Post-it notes to each student. Ask them to write down two or three ideas for improving the world and write it on the Post-it note(s). Have them place their Post-its on a board at the front of the room. Then have students come upfront to read all the notes. Engage students in a conversation around the following:

- What ideas were shared by many of your classmates?  
- Did any ideas surprise you and if so, why?  
- What actions can you take to make some of these ideas come true?

**Engagement, Option 3 (15-20 minutes)**

**EXCLUDED FROM EDUCATION**

*Teacher preparation:* Prepare to display or project the image *Colored Scholars Excluded From Schools.*

Start by engaging students in conversation around the following questions:

- What does the word exclude mean?  
- Have you ever been excluded from something? If so, how did it make you feel?
Then, display the image: *Colored Scholars Excluded From Schools.* Engage students in conversation around the following questions:

- What is happening in the image?
- What do you see that makes you believe that?
- Why would children of African descent be excluded from attending school during this period?
- What do you believe the Black community did as a result?
- What would you have done if you were living at the time?

**EXTEND:** Have students research educational access in the United States or another place of their choosing. Do characteristics like race, gender, religion, disability, etc., impact children's access to educational opportunities? If so or if not, what might this say about the culture being researched?

**Development, Option 1 (40-45 minutes)**

**UNLIKELY FRIENDS:**

**JAMES FORTEN AND WILLIAM LLOYD GARRISON**

**Teacher preparation:** Review Big Idea 5: The Forten Family: Abolitionists and Reformers. Ensure students have access to computers, tablets, or other devices with working internet connections to read Big Idea 5 or print out enough copies for each student.

After students have read Big Idea 5 in class or for homework, engage them in a conversation around the following questions:

- Why was the friendship and partnership between James Forten and William Lloyd Garrison unexpected?
- How did Forten and Garrison fight for the same goal, but in different ways?
- How did their relationship and cooperation benefit both of them?

Break students into two groups: James Forten and William Lloyd Garrison. In the Forten group, have students consider how James Forten's life would have been different had he never met William Lloyd Garrison. In the Garrison group, how would William Lloyd Garrison's life have been different if he had never met James Forten? Have students work together to create a list of how their lives would have been different.

Once students are finished with their list, have them present their thoughts to the class and have a class discussion around the following questions:

- How might history have been different if these two men did not meet each other?
- Did it matter to their work to end slavery that they were so different?
- What is necessary for people with different backgrounds and perspectives to still work together to accomplish great things or make the world a better place?

Finally, ask students if they feel like they could be friends with someone from whom they are very different? What would be the benefits of such a relationship? Would there be any difficulties? How could they overcome them?

**Development, Option 2 (40-45 minutes)**

**REVOLUTIONARY IDEALS AND ACTIONS**

**Teacher preparation:** Review Big Idea 5: The Forten Family: Abolitionists and Reformers. Ensure students have access to computers, tablets, or other devices with working internet connections to read Big Idea 5 or print out enough copies for each student. Prepare copies of the Revolutionary Ideals and Actions worksheet.

Allow students time in class or for homework to read Big Idea 5. Then pass out the worksheet and allow students time to complete it. Afterwards, go over the students' responses to the primary source readings. Then have students present their findings to the class on the ways that James Forten and his family fought for the ideals of the American Revolution.

Engage students in a conversation around the following question or assign the question to be answered for homework:

To what extent was the American Revolution important to James Forten?

**Development, Option 3 (45-50 minutes)**

**COLONIZATION: TWO SIDES OF AN ARGUMENT**

**Teacher preparation:** Review Big Idea 5: The Forten Family: Abolitionists and Reformers especially the section on colonization. Ensure students have access to computers, tablets, or other devices with working internet connections to read Big Idea 5 or print out enough copies for each student. Prepare copies of the Colonization: Two Sides of an Argument worksheet.

Have students read Big Idea 5 in class or for homework. Distribute copies of the worksheet Colonization: Two sides of an Argument to each student or group. Allow students time to complete the worksheet.

Assign students to use both the Big Idea and worksheet to consider how James Forten's views on colonization changed by imagining his perspective in 1820. Assign students to write a letter to a newspaper as if they were James Forten in 1820. Have them focus on why his opinion changed.

**EXTEND:** Have students consider if they ever changed their opinion on an issue that was important to them? Why did they change their mind?
EXTENSIONS/ ADAPTATIONS

SCHOOL DEDICATION
Lombard Street School in Philadelphia was renamed James Forten Elementary School in 1897. If you were dedicating a school to a person, who would it be and why?

ABCDs OF ACTION
Teacher preparation: Prepare to display the image The Anti-Slavery Alphabet. Prepare copies of the ABCDs of Action worksheet.

After students have read Big Idea 5, display the Anti-Slavery Alphabet image. Have students pick a cause that is important to them and create similar A, B, C, D expressions promoting their cause on the worksheet. Display the worksheets around the room.

HOW CAN YOU USE YOUR PEN?
It’s unclear if James Forten was able to vote, but he made his voice known in other ways. Ask students: even though you can’t yet vote, how can you use your pen to make your opinions count? Consider assigning students to write to a local government official about an issue in your community.

CAN I VOTE? (Opinion Piece)
Ask students to list the groups of people who live in the United States that are allowed to vote. Then, ask if they can think of any groups that are not allowed to vote.

Explain to students that not all people who live in the United States and the territories are allowed to vote. Have students research one of the following groups and create an opinion piece in the form of a written article on why they believe that group should or should not be allowed to vote in your state.

- Non-citizens, including permanent legal residents
- Some people with felony convictions (rules vary by state)
- Some people with psychiatric disabilities (Laws vary by state. Some people consider these restrictions to be unfair.)
- United States citizens living in the U.S. territories cannot vote for president
- Citizens under the age of 18

FREE MARKET STORES
Explain to students that in the 1830s, the Forten family supported efforts to purchase goods only produced by “free labor” or non-enslaved workers. Multiple free produce stores, as they were called, operated in Philadelphia at the time. The goods they sold — clothing, ceramics, candy, accessories, and more — were often more expensive and of poorer quality than goods commonly available on the market. The free produce stores struggled as a result.

Engage students in a conversation around the following questions:

- What message did this protest hope to send?
- Do you think shoppers valued quality or cause more highly when shopping?
- Would you have shopped at one of these stores?

Assign students to produce an advertisement for one of these stores as if they were living in 1830.

After students have read Big Idea 5, have them create a presentation in the form of a PowerPoint, Prezi, theatrical performance, or poster board focusing on the history of the issue from Forten’s death in 1842 to today. Have students focus on the following:

- What were the pivotal moments that impacted each issue? (successes and challenges)
- Would James Forten be happy with the status of the issue today? Why or why not?
- Finally, have students consider ways in which they can help make Forten’s vision come true today.

THE FORTEN FAMILY’S VISION TODAY
Assign students to groups based on the following issues that were important to James Forten and his family:

- Group 1 - Ending forced labor for people around the world
- Group 2 - Equal access to education for all Americans
- Group 3 - Right to vote for all Americans
- Group 4 - People of African descent having equal opportunities in the United States.

Culmination/ Group Project

THE FORTEN FAMILY’S VISION TODAY
Assign students to groups based on the following issues that were important to James Forten and his family:

- Group 1 - Ending forced labor for people around the world
- Group 2 - Equal access to education for all Americans
- Group 3 - Right to vote for all Americans
- Group 4 - People of African descent having equal opportunities in the United States.

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- What were the pivotal moments that impacted each issue? (successes and challenges)
- Would James Forten be happy with the status of the issue today? Why or why not?
- Finally, have students consider ways in which they can help make Forten’s vision come true today.
Elder James Forten's World: Life in Philadelphia, 1820-1842

The purpose of this unit is for students to explore how and why communities change. By comparing the city of Philadelphia at the time of James Forten’s youth with the city during his adulthood, students can analyze the causes and effects of shifts within communities and how drastically they could change in one’s lifetime. Students will also consider how individuals can make positive changes within their communities.

AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

The modular activities and extensions in this unit provide opportunities for students to:

• Analyze what changed in Philadelphia during James Forten’s lifetime and what remained the same.

• Consider what it was like to live in Philadelphia in the early to middle 1800s.

• Understand why people choose to leave their homes and relocate.

• Reflect on ways individuals can affect change in their own communities today.

MATERIALS


Map: African American Philadelphia, 1830-1840

Worksheet: Changing Communities

Worksheet: Postcards from Philadelphia

Worksheet: Philadelphia’s Changing Population, 1800-1830

Worksheet: Why I Left

Painting: Pepper-Pot: A Scene in the Philadelphia Market by John Lewis Krimmel, 1811


https://www.dropbox.com/s/whytwfy6pslvkox/FOR-IM.036_Pepper-Pot.tif?dl=0

Engraving: Burning Pennsylvania Hall by John Sartain, 1838

(Quaker and Special Collections, Haverford College)

https://www.dropbox.com/s/qtezsckx1srlkaa/IM_OB.138_Burning%20of%20Pennsylvania%20Hall.tif?dl=0

PROCEDURES

Engagement, Option 1 (5-10 minutes)

LOVE WHERE YOU LIVE

Engage students in a conversation around the following questions:

• Why do you think some people move to big cities instead of rural communities and vice versa?

• If you could live in a city or rural community, where would you live and why?

• Finally, if you could live anywhere where would it be and why?

Engagement, Option 2 (10-15 minutes)

PEPPER POT SOUP

Teacher preparation: Display or project: Pepper-Pot: A Scene in the Philadelphia Market by John Lewis Krimmel

Engage students in a conversation around the following questions:

• Where is this scene taking place?

• What groups of people do you see?

• What is happening in this scene?

• When do you think this scene took place?

• Are there scenes like this in your community today?

Explain to students that pepper pot soup was a dish commonly found in Philadelphia in the 1800s. Engage students in a conversation around the following questions:

• Are any specialty dishes found in your community?

• What can cuisine reveal about a community?

• How can food bring people together?
Development, Option 1 (40-45 minutes)

CLOSE-KNIT COMMUNITIES

Teacher preparation: Prepare to project or display the map African American Philadelphia, 1830-1840.

Start by asking students the following questions:
• What does it mean to be part of a community?
• What does being a good community member look like?
• What places are important to members of the same community?

Then, display the map and engage students in a conversation around the following questions:
• Where were the African American churches located in Philadelphia?
• Why do you think they were located so close to each other?
• How do you think the churches helped to build the community?
• What factors influence why people choose to build buildings and start businesses where they do?

Assign students individually or in a group to propose a place for a store or place of worship within their community. Students will present to the rest of the class focusing on why they chose that specific location.

Development, Option 2 (40-45 minutes)

CHANGING COMMUNITIES


After students have read Big Idea 1 and Big Idea 6, have students complete the worksheet: Changing Communities.

Once students have completed the worksheet, have a discussion with them around the following questions:
• What were some aspects of life in Philadelphia that changed between the two periods?
• Why did these changes take place?
• What changed for people of African descent? Why do you think these changes happened?
• If you were James Forten, how might these changes affect you and your work to end slavery?

EXTEND: Teacher preparation: Prepare copies of the Postcards from Philadelphia worksheet. Have students write a postcard from Philadelphia in 1776 and Philadelphia in 1830 as if they were an abolitionist from the time period. Have them consider what issues they were dealing with in their fight to end slavery and their hopes for the cause.

Culmination/ Group Activity

MY EVOLVING NEIGHBORHOOD

Break students up into three groups as follows:
1776 Group
1830 Group
Today Group

Have them research the following information on your community during the time they were assigned.
• How diverse was (is) your community?
• What was (is) the economy based on?
• Find at least 2 community leaders in your community. These might include politicians, religious figures, educators, businesspeople, or others. What did they do, or are they doing, to help your community?
• What problems did (does) your community face?

Have students present their findings to the class in the form of a visual presentation (PowerPoint, Prezi, Poster). Afterwards, discuss with students any similarities or differences in the three time periods. Finally, have students predict what their community might look like in 100 years.

EXTENSIONS/ ADAPTATIONS

WHY I LEFT

Teacher Preparation: Review Big Idea 6: Elder James Forten's World: Life in Philadelphia, 1820-1842 and print out copies for each student or ensure they have devices with internet connection to read it. Prepare copies of the Why I Left worksheet. Gather some Post-it notes.

After students have read Big Idea 6, hand out the worksheet Why I Left and assign students time to complete it at home and to interview family members. The next day, write the words Push and Pull on the board in front of the class or somewhere in your classroom. Give students Post-it notes and have them put their families push/pull factors on them and place them underneath the words, push and pull.
Once students have finished, have them come up to the board to see their classmates’ Post-its. Discuss with students what similarities they found with their classmates’ push/pull factors. Finally, ask them if there is any reason they would consider moving to another country, town, or city?

VISIT US!
Assign students to create a poster or commercial as if they were the tourist board for your town. What sights, attractions, dining options, and cultural activities can draw tourists to your town? How would this be different or similar if you were creating this in 1776 and/or 1830?

REPEATING HISTORY
Teacher preparation: Display or project the image of Burning Pennsylvania Hall
Display or project the engraving of Burning Pennsylvania Hall. Ask students what is going on in the image. Point out that the firefighters are not attempting to put out the fire at Pennsylvania Hall. Ask students why that might have happened.

Assign students to read Big Idea 6. Afterwards, review with students that Philadelphia experienced five race riots in the years between 1828 and 1849 that destroyed Black homes and businesses.

Engage students in conversation around the following questions:
• Why do we still experience racial unrest today?
• In what forms does this unrest occur?
• How might these forms of racial unrest be experienced and perceived by various members of the communities in which they occur?

Then, share the following quote from Martin Luther King, Jr. with students:
"And I must say tonight that a riot is the language of the unheard. And what is it America has failed to hear?" Engage students in conversation around the following questions:
• How might James Forten have considered this quote in 1834 after his son was attacked and a riot followed days later?
• How might this quote be understood by people today?

LABOR UNIONS
Explain to students that labor unions are organizations of workers who join together to advance their common interests. A union is usually made up of workers from a particular profession, industry, or company. Discuss with students why workers join labor unions. What are some things that workers might advocate for as part of a union? What would be some possible pros and cons of joining a labor union?

FAMILIES MAKING A DIFFERENCE
Like the Fortens, other families contributed to Philadelphia’s Black community. This included the:
• Cassey Family
• Bustill Family
• Douglass Family
• Purvis Family

Have students research the lives and contributions of one of these families and create a Venn Diagram comparing the family with the Forten Family. What causes were they involved in? How did they try to enact change?

JAMES FORTEN’S FUNERAL
Have students write a newspaper article from March 1842 as if they were a journalist covering James Forten’s funeral. Have students consider what it meant to have people of different races attend.

RELIGIOUS LEADERS:
FRIENDS, FOES, AND THE FUTURE
Have students research what caused Richard Allen and Absalom Jones to part ways. Ask students to consider how Jones and Allen are in some ways similar to a later preacher of African descent, Martin Luther King, Jr.?

PLACES IN PHILADELPHIA
Have students create an advertisement for the following attractions that were in Philadelphia in the early 1800s.
• Rickett’s Circus
• Chestnut Street Theater
• Charles Willson Peale's Philadelphia Museum
• Walnut Street Theater

What value do you think they may have added to the communities they were a part of? Can you still go to these attractions today? Are there similar attractions in your city?

PHILADELPHIA’S CHANGING POPULATION, 1800-1830
Assign students to complete the worksheet individually or in groups after reading Big Idea 6.
Unit 7

Continuing the Forten Family Legacy

The purpose of this unit is for students to explore the legacy of James Forten and his family, from his death to today. By understanding the contributions of the Forten family, students will consider how they strived to honor his memory by fighting for the ideals that he believed in. Using James Forten as an example, students will analyze how and why certain historical figures are remembered. Students will also consider how they can remember and honor their own ancestors today.

**MATERIALS**

- **Big Idea 7:** Continuing the Forten Family Legacy
  - Image: James Forten's Historical Marker
  - [https://www.amrevmuseum.org/collection/bust-of-george-washington](https://www.amrevmuseum.org/collection/bust-of-george-washington)
  - Image: Portrait of James Forten by an unidentified artist, 1820s-1830s (Collection of the Historical Society of Pennsylvania)
  - [https://www.dropbox.com/s/gujiolqokjjsp5b/FOR-IM.001_James%20Forten%20Portrait.tif?dl=0](https://www.dropbox.com/s/gujiolqokjjsp5b/FOR-IM.001_James%20Forten%20Portrait.tif?dl=0)
  - Image: Am I Not A Woman or Sister
  - [https://www.dropbox.com/s/asfiye7u5u4jgkt/IM_OB.014_Female%20Anti-Slavery%20Society%20Seal.tiff?dl=0](https://www.dropbox.com/s/asfiye7u5u4jgkt/IM_OB.014_Female%20Anti-Slavery%20Society%20Seal.tiff?dl=0)

Handout: Words of the Forten Family

Object Card: Family Heirlooms

Worksheet: Continuing the Legacy

**AIMS AND OBJECTIVES**

The modular activities and extensions in this unit provide opportunities for students to:

- Analyze the contributions made by the Forten family to preserve the ideals of the American Revolution.
- Consider why and how historical figures are remembered, and some are forgotten.
- Reflect on ways they can remember and honor their own ancestors today.

**PROCEDURES**

**Engagement, Option 1** (10-15 minutes)

**FORGOTTEN FIGURES**

*Teacher preparation:* Prepare to display both the image of James Forten and the image of George Washington.

Display or project the image: Bust of George Washington. Ask students if they know who the bust is of. Do they think most people would recognize who this bust portrays? Then display or project the image of James Forten. Ask the same questions. (If students do not know who James Forten is, you can briefly explain his story) Then engage students in a conversation around the following questions:

- Why do you think most people would recognize George Washington and not recognize James Forten?
- What are some factors that influence why certain historic figures are remembered in history?
- Why do you think some historical figures, like James Forten, are not as well-known?
- What do you think the criteria should be for deciding what historical stories are important to tell? Why? How can we ensure that important but less well-known stories aren't ignored or forgotten?

**Engagement, Option 2** (10-15 minutes)

**FAMILY HEIRLOOMS**

*Teacher preparation:* Prepare to display or project the object card Family Heirlooms.

Begin by engaging students in conversation around the following questions:

- What is the difference between a historical object and a historical document?
• How might objects and documents help historians tell stories about the past?
• What type of objects would be useful for historians?

Then display or project the object card: Family Heirlooms. Tell students that both of these objects belonged to women in the Forten family. Give students a few minutes to observe the objects.

Engage students in conversation around the following question:
• For each of the objects, what might they reveal to us about the Forten family? (Sampler — Forten's daughters were educated, something the Forten family greatly valued. Calling Card Plate — Forten's granddaughter had an active social life.)

EXTEND: Assign students to bring in an object from home that says something about themselves or their family. Have the students present it to the class and let their classmates guess what the object reveals.

EXTEND: Have students create their own calling cards.

Development, Option 1 (40-45 minutes)

HISTORIC MARKERS AT HOME

Teacher preparation: Review Big Idea 7: Continuing the Forten Family Legacy. Ensure students have access to computers, tablets, or other devices with working internet connections to read Big Idea 7 or print out enough copies for each student. Prepare to display or project an image of James Forten’s historical marker found on Lombard Street in Philadelphia.

Begin by engaging students in conversation around the following questions:
• Do you know what a historical marker is? (If yes, continue to the next questions. If no, display the image of James Forten’s historical marker).
• Where have you seen one? Do you remember who or what event was celebrated?
• How did the historical marker help you understand the person or event?

Then display the image of James Forten’s historical marker and read the text aloud:

Wealthy sailmaker who employed multi-racial craftsmen, Forten was a leader of the African-American community in Philadelphia and a champion of reform causes. The American Antislavery Society was organized in his house here in 1833.

After students have read Big Idea 7 for homework or in class, distribute the handout and the worksheet for students to complete in small groups. After students have completed the worksheet, have a class discussion around the following questions:
• What does the word “ideal” mean?
• What ideals were the Forten family concerned with?
• In what ways did James Forten’s family members advance his legacy?
• How did the family’s words mirror their actions?
• What are some ways that you can continue advancing the Forten family’s legacy today?

Culmination
(Research Project and one day in class for the celebration)

MY AMAZING ANCESTORS CELEBRATION

Teacher preparation: Prepare a class period to celebrate the students’ ancestors. Optional: Bring a cake or have students bring a favorite food of their celebrated person.

Assign students to find one person in their family or community (living or dead) that they want to know more about. Have them conduct an interview with the person or someone who knew/knows them well. Students should focus on their person’s accomplishments, challenges, and issues that they care/cared about. From the interviews, have students prepare to share their favorite story about the person with the class. At the end of the class celebration, engage students in conversation around the following questions:

• Other than a historical marker, what are some other ways we can remember James Forten?
• What lessons can we learn from his life and legacy?

Have students present their revised markers and ideas of other ways to remember James Forten to the class.

EXTEND: Have students individually or in groups research a person from your community that they feel is deserving of a historical marker. What should the maker say? Where should it be located? Have them write a letter to a local newspaper, mayor of your town, or local historical commission proposing the marker and why it should be created.

Development, Option 2 (45-50 minutes)

CONTINUING THE LEGACY

Teacher preparation: Review Big Idea 7: Continuing the Forten Family Legacy. Ensure students have access to computers, tablets, or other devices with working internet connections to read Big Idea 7 or print out enough copies for each student. Prepare copies of the handout Words of the Forten Family and worksheet Continuing the Legacy.

After students have read Big Idea 7 for homework or in class, distribute the handout and the worksheet for students to complete in small groups. After students have completed the worksheet, have a class discussion around the following questions:
• What does the word “ideal” mean?
• What ideals were the Forten family concerned with?
• In what ways did James Forten’s family members advance his legacy?
• How did the family’s words mirror their actions?
• What are some ways that you can continue advancing the Forten family’s legacy today?

Culmination
(Research Project and one day in class for the celebration)
**EXTENSIONS/ ADAPTATIONS**

**WHAT’S IN A NAME?**
James Forten named his second son, Robert Bridges Forten, after the man who mentored him in the sail making business, Robert Bridges. Engage students in a conversation around the following questions:

- Is there someone who made a difference in your life?
- How can you honor the people that make a difference in your life?
- Are you named after someone? Why?

**WE WILL PROVE OURSELVES MEN**

*Teacher preparation:* Prepare to project or display the Flag of the 127th Regiment USCT (United States Colored Troops). Explain to students that Philadelphia artist David Bustill Bowser painted this silk flag for the 127th Regiment of United States Colored Troops. It is one of a probable total of 11 flags that Bowser painted for the 11 USCT regiments that were raised in Philadelphia and trained at Camp William Penn. Of those 11 flags, this is the only one that survives.

Have a conversation with students around the following questions:

- What images do you see on the flag?
- What do you think the woman represents?
- Based on your observations of the flag, what do you think it symbolized?
- What might the phrase “We Will Prove Ourselves Men” have meant during the Civil War? And why might the people carrying the flag have felt this message was important?
- How do you think the flag was viewed by other groups of people during the Civil War?
- Do you think the phrase “We Will Prove Ourselves Men” still has meaning today? For whom, and why?

**FAMOUS FAMILIES**

Have students pick their favorite actor, musician, or sports star. Have them research that person’s family and present one or two interesting facts about the family to the class, like the television show, Who Do You Think You Are? Students can also research how or if the family is helping to advance the legacy of their person or following in their footsteps.

**AM I NOT A WOMEN AND A SISTER**

*Teacher preparation:* Prepare to display or project the image Am I Not a Woman and a Sister.

Explain to students that the Philadelphia Female Anti-Slavery Society, founded in part by James Forten’s wife and his daughters, and other women’s abolitionist groups used this image of an enslaved woman in chains with the words, “Am I Not a Woman and a Sister?” as their official seal.

Engage students in a conversation around the following questions:

- What do you see in the image?
- What message is this seal trying to convey?
- How do you know this based on your observation of the image?
- How do you think this image was received/viewed/understood by the people who saw it, created it, or were represented in it?
- How can images be powerful tools for those fighting for a cause?

Assign students to pick a cause that they and their family are passionate about and to create a seal for a new organization dedicated to furthering that cause. Have them choose a name for the organization and explain the meaning of the imagery on their seal.

**EXHIBIT EXPLORATION**

The Museum of the American Revolution’s exhibit, Black Founders: The Forten Family of Philadelphia tells the story of James Forten and his family. Ask students: If you could pick a little-known character in history to design an exhibit on, who would it be and why? What stories from their life would you like to tell in the exhibit? What objects, documents and photographs would you use in the exhibit?

Have students design an exhibit outline with the different themes of the exhibit.

**YOUR LEGACY**

Hand out one Post-it notes to each student. Have students write down what they want their legacy to be or how they want to be remembered, using one or two sentences. Have the students place the Post-it notes around the room. Afterwards, have students walk around the room and read the other Post-its. Then, ask the students if there are any common themes? What are some ways to work towards leaving this legacy?
GLOSSARY

ABOLITION
The actions of a person or group to legally end a system of oppression, such as slavery.

AGENCY
The ability to use power in one's own life.

ANONYMOUS
Not identified with a name, often to keep a person's identity secret.

BLOCKADE
To close or seal off a place in order to prevent people and/or goods from entering or leaving.

BOycott
A form of protest in which people refuse to buy or use the goods or services of an organization or person.

CIVIL DISOBEDIENCE
The refusal to follow a particular law or the act of demanding change by peaceful protest.

DESEGREGATE
The ending of a policy that separates people, usually because of their race, religion or gender.

EMBARGO
A government sponsored ban on trade or other commercial activity with a particular country or countries.

ENSLAVED
Owned by another person. Saying “enslaved person” rather than “slave” can remind people of the humanity of the person who is in the condition of being owned by another person.

ENTREPRENEUR
A person who creates and operates a new business, usually bearing most of the risks and enjoying most of the rewards.

FID
A wooden tool used in ropework (to help untie knots and get in between the twists of a rope) and canvaswork (to create and shape holes called grommets).

FOREMAN
A person who supervises and directs others in a place of work.

FUGITIVE SLAVE ACT (1793 AND 1850)
The Fugitive Slave Act of 1793 allowed for the capture and return of freedom-seekers by allowing local governments to seize and return them to their former owners. The act also penalized anyone who assisted a freedom-seeker. Another Fugitive Slave Act was enacted in 1850 before the Civil War with harsher punishments for anyone that helped a freedom-seeker.

GALLEY
The compartment of a train, ship or airplane where food is prepared and cooked.

INDENTURED SERVANTS
Individuals who have a contract to serve as laborers for a specific amount of time before receiving their freedom. These contracts were often entered into willingly by British subjects who wanted passage across the Atlantic Ocean to the British colonies but could not afford it themselves or by those—Europeans, free people of African descent—who needed food, shelter, and clothing and the opportunity to learn a skill. Sometimes British subjects were sentenced to indentured servitude as punishment for a crime or because they could not pay their debts.

INDUSTRIALIZATION
The wide scale development of industries in a country or region.

INTEGRATED
No longer separated and acting as one unit.

INTERRACIAL
Involving people of different races.

MANUMIT
To free an individual enslaved person or a small number of enslaved people. A similar word, emancipate, generally applies to larger numbers of enslaved people.

Matriarch
A woman who is the head of her family or tribe.

MESS
A small group of people, usually soldiers who eat their meals together and share a living space such as a tent.

MIGRANT
A person who moves from one place to another, usually in order to find work or better living conditions.

PENSION
A specific amount of money a person receives from a government as payment for their past public service (including in the military) or to help pay for their living expenses when they reach a certain age.

PETITION
A plea or a written document expressing complaints and desired actions, signed by one or multiple members of a community.

PHILANTHROPISTS
People who seek to help others, especially by the generous donation of money to good causes.

PREamble
The beginning of a document that states its purpose.

PRECEDENT
An earlier action or event that is seen as an example or guide for similar actions or events.

PRIVATEER
A private sailing ship that has been authorized by a government to attack and capture enemy vessels and supplies in a time of war. The term can also be used to describe a sailor who serves aboard a privateer ship.

RATIFY
To sign or give formal approval to a treaty, constitution, contract, or agreement to make it officially valid.

REGIMENT
A group of soldiers in a military unit that fight together on foot or on horseback. The size of a regiment varies from army to army, but it was usually hundreds of soldiers segregated, separated or divided into groups.

SAILMAKER'S PALM
Protection for the palm of a hand while sewing.

SEGREGATED
Separated or divided.

STEREOTYPE
A belief or generalization (often unfair and untrue) that people have about a specific group.

SUFFRAGE
The right to vote in an election.

TEMPERANCE
To refrain from drinking alcohol or to moderate a specific behavior.

UNALIENABLE (OR INALIENABLE)
Unable to be taken away from or given away by someone. Often used in relation to a person's individual rights.

UNDERGROUND RAILROAD
A network of routes and safe houses established in the United States during the early 1800s used by enslaved people to help them escape slavery and gain their freedom in a free state or Canada.

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